

## **Town Meeting Coordinating Committee**

Meeting of Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Town Hall, Romer Room

**Attendance:** Adrienne Terrizzi, Rob Crowner, Mary Streeter, Nonny Burack, Peggy Roberts (arrived 3:38), Harry Brooks (arrived 4:10). Guests: Kevin Eddings, Carol Gray (via Skype).

**1. Call to order:** Mary calls the meeting to order at 3:35pm.

**2. Electronic voting:** Mary reports that two responses to TMCC's request for subcommittee volunteers were received: Anurag Sharma will be invited to the next subcommittee meeting. Dick Bentley requested that postings to the listserv be made in a larger font for easier reading.

Adrienne reports that Subcommittee #1 received a lot of good information on costs and staffing from Sue Audette of the Town Clerk's office and a lot of good advice about technology from Kris Pacunas of the IT department at its meeting just prior to this TMCC meeting (see minutes for details). The Select Board/Town Manager's office is not involved in administering voting at Town Meeting and therefore did not attend. In particular, Kris recommended focusing on the one-time cost of an electronic voting system versus the ongoing benefits it could provide in productivity, asserting that all other costs would balance out. He volunteered to research available systems himself, since he would be responsible for maintaining it anyway, thereby obviating the need to populate Subcommittee #2.

The next meeting of Subcommittee #1 is tentatively set for either just before or just after the next TMCC meeting, September 7, depending on participants' availability.

**3. ACTV audio subcommittee:** Adrienne summarizes the agenda for the subcommittee's September 1 meeting, which will take place in the Middle School auditorium: (a) review of preliminary recommendations made by Jim Lescault of ACTV; (b) new equipment that might be needed; and (c) how changes will be affected and paid for. Peggy notes that the recent news about ACTV being displaced from its current location may impact its capability for future investments.

Adrienne reports that ACTV has agreed to caption Town Meeting broadcasts, but only with article number under discussion and short title. However, a time stamp will be added to the recording so that viewers can advance directly to a particular article when retrieving a broadcast on demand from the ACTV website.

**4. Fall Town Meeting planning:** Peggy states that two members of the League of Women Voters will assist Nonny and her in organizing the warrant review.

The committee discusses the articles expected to be brought to Fall Town Meeting and speculates that a bus tour may not be relevant or necessary. If it is decided to conduct a bus tour, further discussion about organizing and filming it will need to be held. Mary states that video editing workshops presented by ACTV are advertised in advance on the ACTV website.

Due to recent poor attendance, the precinct meeting for Precinct 9 will be combined with that of Precincts 4 and 10. Other precinct meetings will consist of Precincts 1, 2, and 3; Precincts 5 and 6; and Precincts 7 and 8. Co-facilitators from different precincts will be sought. It is hoped that the new editor of the *Amherst Bulletin* will be more amenable to running event listings for TMCC.

The committee discusses how to approach the warrant in a precinct meeting, such as in order from first to last, by most interesting or controversial first, or in some other way. Adrienne suggests that people be encouraged to identify particular articles for discussion in the regular advertising that is done for precinct meetings; they should be opportunities to focus rather than mini-warrant



reviews and should be especially engaging and satisfying for new Town Meeting members. Mary states that some meetings may be served by the attendance of an "outside expert" such as a Planning Board or Select Board member in order to explain particular articles.

Peggy states that questions can be clarified and a sense of the issues made known, but actual debate should not take place. Mary notes that the warrant for Wayland Town Meeting includes both for and against arguments for every article and states that when people learn of the existence of alternate viewpoints at precinct meetings, they are more likely to search out additional information and to take advantage of other resources. Adrienne states that successful precinct meetings feature an opportunity to discuss issues with neighbors.

Peggy states that it should be a goal to return to the format of separate meetings for each precinct. When precinct meetings were first introduced, attendance was much better and often included non-TM members. Mary observes that newspaper coverage was better before. During a discussion of how to get the local newspaper more interested in TMCC events, Carol suggests asking for a one-off guest column written by TMCC in the month before any Town Meeting.

**5. Spring Town Meeting planning:** Peggy states that 2011 Annual Town Meeting will start on May 2, meaning the warrant will likely be signed on April 4. The committee agrees to reserve the Town Room on Thursday, April 14 for the warrant review.

During a discussion about the necessity of recording the bus tour and how much editing time should be provided before the start of Town Meeting so that it can be viewed conveniently by Town Meeting members, Nonny suggests conducting two distinct productions of a bus tour: one that consists only of video of the relevant locations, and one that consists only of a tour given for attendees without any filming. That way, the first can be assembled well in advance and shown on ACTV while the other can take place just before Town Meeting begins, when the weather is likely to be better.

Adrienne agrees to inquire about the issues of filming and editing for the bus tour when she meets with Jim Lescault in September.

**6. Finance Committee budget presentation survey:** Peggy distributes an email from Andy Steinberg, which the committee agrees to discuss at the next meeting.

**7. Minutes of August 12, 2010:** The committee agrees to consider the minutes of the August 12 meeting at the next meeting.

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting is adjourned at 5:22pm. The next meeting will take place at either 3:30 or 4:30 on Tuesday, September 7 in the Town Room, pending the scheduling of Subcommittee #1 meeting at one of those times. Mary will inform Peggy of the arrangements as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Crowner

Documents distributed at the meeting:

1. agenda
2. Andy Steinberg email regarding Finance Committee budget presentation
3. summary of "green ideas" contained in the master plan, assembled by Carol Gray